

Childers Amendment Cracks Down on Employment of Illegal Immigrants

Congressman Childers Passes Amendment to Bridge Bill

July 24, 2008

Washington, DC - Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) yesterday introduced legislation to ensure that employment funding authorized by the National Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act (H.R. 3999) goes directly to American citizens. The Childers amendment, which would prohibit H.R. 3999 funds from being used for the employment of illegal aliens, today won overwhelming bipartisan support in the House by a vote of 416-1.

"The First Congressional District of Mississippi is currently staggering under the prevailing economic situation," said Congressman Childers. "On a daily basis, my constituents express their concerns of keeping their jobs with the influx of foreign illegal labor into Mississippi. Portions of North Mississippi have unemployment rates that are nearly double the national average.

"North Mississippi desperately needs many of the infrastructure improvements included in H.R. 3999 in order to spur economic and community development. However, I am committed to ensuring that every federal dollar allocated to the National Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act for employment purposes will specifically go towards employing hardworking American citizens who desperately need a consistent paycheck. I am proud to have introduced and passed bipartisan legislation that puts money back in Americans' pockets when they need it most."

The House passed the National Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act today by a vote of 367-55. The Act calls for the repair and inspection of faulty bridges across the country through the following measures:

- Authorizes an additional \$1 billion in Fiscal Year 2009 for the Federal Highway

Administration (FHWA) Highway Bridge Program, and bars the earmarking of those funds by Congress or the administration;

- Orders the FHWA to update its national bridge inspection standards to require annual inspections of bridges that are rated "structurally deficient" and to ensure that states use uniform standards when conducting these inspections and evaluations;

- Imposes a risk-based prioritization of bridges that need to be reconstructed or rehabilitated, and requires an independent review of the risk-determination process developed by the FHWA

- Requires states, as a condition of receiving funds from the Highway Bridge Program, to submit an annually-updated five-year performance plan for departmental approval

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